


USAA

MAGAZINE

A MEMBER'S GUIDE TO FINANCIAL SECURITY

QUOTABLE

A portrait of Kelly Perdew, a man with short brown hair, wearing a dark suit jacket, a light blue dress shirt, and a red patterned tie. He is smiling slightly and looking directly at the camera. An American flag is visible in the background on the right side.

"The key to a strong leader is integrity — on and off the playing field. Your character is of the utmost importance."

» Kelly Perdew,
"The Apprentice" winner,
West Point graduate

USAA member since 1987

For a look at Kelly Perdew's life before, during, and after "The Apprentice," see page 14 of this issue.

You're hired!

Life before, during, and after 'The Apprentice'

» When Kelly Perdeu signed up for the Army, he never dreamed the skills he'd learn as a platoon leader and military intelligence officer would help him land a six-figure job with celebrity billionaire Donald Trump.

But the West Point graduate and former Army Ranger says that's exactly what gave him the edge over 17 competitors on the second season of NBC's hit reality show, "The Apprentice." And he says it's what continues to help him succeed in business.

"When I left the military, I was looking forward to becoming a corporate attorney and orchestrating large business deals," he says. "I never dreamed at the time that I'd win the most popular reality television show, write a book on leadership, host a cable television show about military technologies, and start a company with Donald Trump."

The new company, which was Mr. Perdeu's idea, markets brand-name products to affluent customers via direct-mail coupons. His other latest venture is hosting Discovery's new show, "G.I. Factory," which begins airing in March.

Even before winning "The Apprentice" in 2004, Mr. Perdeu had built a successful career, raising \$5 million in equity financing for three startup companies and selling one for eight figures. But he didn't have the celebrity status that comes with the territory today.

That reality hit him the night after winning "The Apprentice" when he appeared with comedic actor Ben Stiller on "The Tonight Show with Jay Leno." "There I am, riding around on Ben Stiller's back, piggyback, on 'The Tonight Show,'" Mr. Perdeu recalls. "That's when I knew my life had changed."

It wasn't until two weeks later when he needed to ask Mr. Trump a question that he realized he had entered an entirely new world.

"I call him, and he says, 'Kelly, my main man,'" Mr. Perdeu says. "That was a surreal moment. I'm thinking, 'OK, I'm talking to a billionaire on my cell phone, and he knows me!'" <<



1989 West Point graduate Kelly Perdeu

Kelly Perdeu's 10 Leadership Principles

1 Integrity: Take the harder right over the easier wrong.

2 Duty: Do what you're supposed to do, when you're supposed to do it.

3 Passion: Be passionate about what you do, or do what you're passionate about.

4 Impeccability: If it is worth doing, it is worth doing right.

5 Teamwork: There is no "I" in TEAM.

6 Selfless Services: Give back.

7 Planning: Fail to plan, plan to fail.

8 Loyalty: Up, down, and across your organization.

9 Perseverance: It's not the size of the dog in the fight; it's the size of the fight in the dog.

10 Flexibility: The person with the most varied responses wins.

From Kelly Perdeu's "TAKE COMMAND: 10 Leadership Principles I Learned in the Military and Put to Work for Donald Trump"